



Name: Gundy Keller  
 Born: 1962  
 Family status: unmarried, one daughter  
 Nastassja-Giulia, 16  
 Domicil: Aschaffenburg  
 Passions: photography, vegetarian cooking

Thorndal TBJ  
 Thorndal STC 62 N S1-Custom  
 G&L Telecaster Strat  
 Godin ACS-Slim Nylon  
 Godin Acousticaster 12+6  
 '78 Ibanez Artist Custom  
 Epiphone Sheraton Elitist  
 Fernandes-Sustainer Strat w.  
 Roland VG-99, VG-8, GR-33  
 Roland VB-99 V-Bass  
 Boss GT-10  
 Boss ME-70  
 Boss RE-20  
 Boss BD-2  
 EYB-Sitar Bridge GK-ready  
 Taylor 710 Steelstring  
 Furch OM-34 Acoustic  
 Furch MA-22 Mandolin  
 Takamine Nylonstring  
 Squier 82`JV-JazzBass  
 ESP 86`Jazz Bass  
 Guytron GT100-FV  
 Hughes & Kettner Amp: Mr  
 Marshall JMP Super Lead Top  
 Marshall JCM 800 Combo  
 Marshall vintage 4x12 Cabinet  
 Hughes & Kettner 2x12 Cabinet

„If it doesn't work, fix it!“

Gundy Keller

[www.gkmasterclass.de](http://www.gkmasterclass.de)

Fotos: Patricia Kalisch, Svenja Dittrich, Julia Nuss, Gundy Keller

Gundy Keller is a top guitarist and due to his long term engagement with Roland/BOSS is also an institution when it comes to Sound and Equipment. He talks to us about his new GK Masterclass Seminars and his own sound philosophy.

“MIDI”, “Guitarsynth” and “Multi-effects” are words that evoke allergic reactions with many vintage lovers. Modeling-Amp instead of a '59 Bassman? Gundy Keller is a German guitar player who not only uses digital equipment but is also engaged in its development. Born in 1962 he was already a professional musician at the age of 18 and has managed a music school for 22 years. He has been working for Roland/BOSS as a demonstrator since 1986 and assists with the development of new electronic products as well. Now with his new GK-Masterclasses, he wishes to help others who want to find the right guitar sound – and give them ideas for good equipment.

**Gundy, recently you have started the so-called Masterclasses. What's the idea?**

Many guitarists nowadays have an aversion towards electronics and complex gear – but they still want a good guitar sound. During the Masterclass, when I take care of a customer for the whole day, on one hand I wish to show what they can create with their own equipment, and on the other hand I wish to show that even complex gear is not an enemy but a very handy tool. When the customer arrives he has to set up his gear and play some sounds for about five minutes. Then we can soon see or hear the problem. Besides the amp and guitar, all other gear is removed and the customer will get 8 or 9 pedals from my “boutique”, with which he has to create four sounds: clean, crunch, fat and lead ... all that a guitarist needs.

**It should not be the case that the sound becomes so important that one cannot concentrate on playing.**

Exactly. The next step is playing backing tracks. That is essential for a guitar sound. In particular Drums and Bass, and if possible ... loud. One can't create a stage sound when the sound is at living room level. These days people have four-channel amps and I can feel that it takes a while to balance the sound correctly. My customers have to know their amplifiers top to bottom. There are many possibilities nowadays – probably too many – therefore one should have a concept, what one can use and what one cannot. And that's where I can help.

„Free yourself from perfectionism – and you come back and play!“

**What's your own philosophy concerning sound and equipment?**

Ok, I've got quite a lot of gear here, but I always try to avoid people buying a lot of stuff. Does it help in achieving your goal? I have concluded the following: free yourself from the perfectionism of constantly optimizing your gear, and you will get back to playing music. The fingers make the tone! That's my advice during guitar lessons. My goal is to improve the interaction between the person, his guitar and other gear, and due to my long time experience, I can often solve problems in a short time. Just to buy equipment all the time will not give the desired results. One must be willing to correctly use what's available.

**So, one shouldn't have fear of useful and possibly also difficult equipment, but the other hand should not be an addict to new equipment.**

Yes, don't let yourself get carried away with all the stuff you can use and think you need to have! Sure, I also have an expensive Guytron Amp and old Marshalls - but I have often demonstrated the Roland Cube-80 and have been amazed at the great sounds this amp creates. Just make music and omit the components that are not useful to you. Looking for THE guitar sound is like climbing the Mount Everest. Most importantly, if your sound inspires you, it is the right sound!

**Which amps are your favorite?**

I always have to control myself not to get into an Amp frenzy; while being on tour I often have the opportunity to be able to play on cool equipment., e.g. the German Roots-Amplifiers or Divided by 13. I did purchase a Guytron FV-100, which I really love, because on one hand it has a glassy clean sound and on the other hand a nice compressed Plexi tone. For recording I still have two '78 Marshalls and a JCM800 Combo that sounds very different than expected from a Marshall. Moreover I deeply trust a Hughes & Kettner TriAmp MKII.

**And your favorite guitar?**

With my Suhr-Strat I have found the best compromise, traditional but also with Hi-Gain options. My PRS McCarty on the other hand gives authentic Les-Paul sounds, but remains flexible because of split coils. I also love my old G&L Telecaster – although I never liked Teles before as they did not produce a rock sound. Now I have to admit there's nothing better character-wise. I still don't have an ES 335, instead a beautiful Epiphone Elitist ES-style semi acoustic. And I'm sure another nice les Paul and an old Strat will find their way to me sometime.

**But you are not a real vintage lover are you?**

Actually I am but I have always had to invest in various areas. I have 3 older instruments, a '82 JV Squier Jazz Bass, and old JV Squier Strat and an Ibanez Artist from '77. The highest priority besides sound is good playability, good intonation and tuning stability. Vintage instruments do not always have these qualities. But the special feeling of vintage instruments is undisputable.

**Are you often accused of using computer and MIDI on stage?**

As I have been demonstrating and co-developing guitar synths and virtual guitar systems such as the VG-99, you are not always put in touch with a traditional sound. But by studying these techniques, I have been able to expand my horizon as a musician. But know the limits. Real purists

„A black musician once said to me:  
Gundy, not bad for a white ass!“

who tell me they play without effects will be asked by me to name those guitarists who they like to listen to. They mention David Gilmore, Joe Satriani, Eric Johnson or even The Edge of U2. Have they ever seen the pedal boards and amp rigs of these guys ... ?

**What is important regarding playability for you?**

Phasing, Dynamic, eloquence and especially Rhythm. A good guitarist has absolute control over the rhythm. And I don't mean playing just tight, but knowing when to play laid back and when not. Fortunately I started out as a drummer ... that gave me the basis for rhythm. For most of my life I have listened to a lot of black music and played with black musicians. One of them said "Gundy, not bad for a white ass!" A big compliment.

**What is actually your development toward the guitar?**

I am a total self-educator. Learning by doing! Fairly soon I entered the professional field as I had the possibility to play in a band that toured all over Germany with Thomas Gottschalk. At some gigs we played for more than 3500 people. Unfortunately the demand for rock music decreased sometime after and I set out to LA but had to experience that not everything was perfect there too. Back in Germany I established a music school and studio and realized that life was quite good in Germany. Due to the collaboration with Roland I could travel all over the world and experience amazing things, that have made me grow as a human and as a musician.

**Which guitarists impress you the most at the moment?**

David Grissom has really managed to move me. He is not a spectacular player but what he plays makes you want to pick up a guitar yourself. Another example is Carl Verheyen. One year ago I saw him play for 30 people...a tragedy. He played such a great gig that I still have goose bumps: intelligent, entertaining and with verve. Doyle Bramhall II is also worth taking note of. The list is actually endless: Michael Landau, Andy



First Lesson of the Master Class: The customer shows how he plays with his current know-how, equipment and instrument. The desired ability is achieved by means of one on one tuition which leads to many positive experiences during the two day masterclass. Right: Gundy's All-in-one workhorse BOSS GT-10.

Timmons, Scott Henderson, Joe Bonamassa, Eric Johnson, but also my buddy Thomas Blug still inspire me to play guitar. My earlier influences are Neal Schon, Peter Frampton, Kiim Mitchell, Frank Marino, the early Van Halen, Jeff Beck, Mark Farner, Pat Travers, Pat Thrall, Santana, Johnny Guitar Watson, George Benson, Johnny Winter ... and a few hundred more!

„A good guitar player has complete  
rhythmic control !“

**Finally: your favorite music anecdote.**

At the end of the 80's I gave a performance for Roland in Oslo. I wore Spandex trousers, had a perm and with one pose a big strand of my hair got into my mouth and got stuck in my chewing gum. There were two options: cut off the affected hair or pull them out one by one. I choose for the latter and it took me fifteen minutes on stage to get each hair out of the gum. Meanwhile I mumbled a collection of anecdotes from my musicians life into the microphone ... the people cracked up so hard.

Michael Wagner



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*Left:  
From this armada  
of effects devices,  
the customer creates  
his dream sounds.*



*Right:  
A small selection  
of proven classic  
stompboxes that  
have proved reliable  
both in live and  
studio situations.*